

Promise? by **KahlantheConfessor**

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Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Martin Brenner, Max (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler

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Summary:

Season 2 Spoilers

Mike maybe falls apart without El.

353 Days Apart

Promise?

Author's Note:

Season 2 Spoilers

Just finished binging Strangers Things 2 and the feels man, the feels.

Dr. Brenner's men barely made a noise as their now lifeless bodies fell uselessly to the floor, blood streaming from their eyes. But El collapsing sounded like a shockwave to me. And then suddenly there was Dr. Brenner, the monster, himself. We were trapped and El was down for the count. 'We are so screwed, shit'

But then suddenly the Demogorgon careened through the wall and destroyed Dr. Brenner almost as if on cue. We had no choice but to run. Dustin scooped up El and we ran into the nearest classroom. It was Mr. Clarke's. Lucas helped Dustin to lay El out on a lab table. El was small in a way I never thought of her as before. I reassured her that we would be okay, that I would keep her safe. All the fantasies of her and our life after this was over came pouring out of me.

"The snow ball, we can go to the snow ball.."

Her voice was tiny "Promise?"

"Promise."

I ran my fingers over her cold hand. Nothing more could be exchanged before the sound of the monster's yawp and the rapid succession of gunfire broke the eerie silence. The lights flickered ominously as we all faced the wooden door that was the only thing standing between our huddle and the beast. The screams from the gun battle left us feeling cold as we knew the manmade weapons stood no chance against the demon from the Upside Down and then worse, the silence that seemed to echo as the last gun fell quiet.

"Is it, is it dead?" Dustin asked although we all knew what had occurred in the hall.

The door broke loose from the wall as the Demogorgon crashed through it. We scrambled to get Lucas' wrist rocket out of his bag. Dustin yanked the rocks out and Lucas took aim at the monster before us, but unlike Goliath, this beast wasn't going down with rocks alone. The monster didn't even seem fazed by the projectiles hitting him. Then one shot and the Demogorgon was flung back against the chalkboard. We watched in shock that those tiny rocks could do that, but then I turned and saw El, walking determinedly between Lucas and me. Blood trickled from her nose and her ears.

"Eleven, stop. Stop, Eleven." I was flung back away from her and crashed against the cabinets. I could only watch in mounting horror as she approached the suspended body of the Demogorgon.

El slowly turned back and our eyes locked instinctively. I could see all the things we never got to say, laid out in her brown eyes. I knew her plan then. She was going to sacrifice herself for me. I couldn't move, frozen in this too short eternity where the only things that existed were me, her, and those eyes.

"Goodbye, Mike." Said so finality. *'No, no, nononononono. El, no'* She turned back towards the Demogorgon and then she was gone. Disappeared in a flashing of lights and hissing chaos, just gone.

"El!"

Day 1

Will had been found by his mom and Hopper. The only one good thing to come from last night. I couldn't believe that Eleven was just gone. In just five days, she had turned by heart upside down and now she was gone. After visiting with Will, I stumbled lifelessly back to the basement. Seeing the untouched fort, I climbed inside and broke down. I grabbed the radio and tried every channel, crying out to her.

"El, please, El." But all I heard was static.

Day 43

After Will's slow recovery, the party wanted to return to normal and D&D nights came back on. I just didn't have the heart for it. Their laughing seemed distant because it had been so long since I had a reason to smile. While outwardly, I tried to keep up appearances, every minute that ticked by without her next to me felt like my soul leaking out through my shoes. I turned towards the fort I kept up to welcome her back when *'If' when* she returned to me. I could almost see her sitting there, but there was nothing under those blankets but the cold beating of my heart.

Day 60

Two months and still radio silence. I couldn't wouldn't believe she was dead. El was too strong to die. The days felt heavy and the tension that always seemed to be there since she left me in November weighed at me. Mornings seemed to take more and more energy as my dreams were filled with visions of her.

Mom and Dad had decided that I should be over my trauma and I couldn't bring myself to care if they gave a shit or not. They wanted me to be normal but I wasn't before and I certainly would never be since meeting El. Whenever I had free time, I spent it sitting in our spot, nuzzled in the blankets that were slowly losing her scent and reaching out through the walkie talkie hoping for a sign.

Day 97

Grounded again for talking back to the principal, but I couldn't care less. The days seemed endless and the nights too short. I just want you back, El.

Day 176

"El, please. Can you hear me? Come in."

Day 228

"El, it's my birthday today. The only thing I want is for you to come home, please?" My voice sounded pitiful even to me, but there was no one listening so it didn't matter anyway.

Day 300

"El, it's been 10 months, please, you don't have to come back, but I need to know that you're okay. Please.." The radio made some feedback. "El, El is that you?" Just some beeping. Tap, Tap, beep beep, tap, beep, tap, beep.

“Stupid freaking trucker probably left his damn radio on again.” I threw the walkie down in disgust and wrapped El’s blanket further around myself. I just want her to be okay.

Day 351

“El, some stupid girl came to school today. Freaking Dustin and Lucas are falling all over themselves, but she doesn’t come close to you. I miss you El. It’s Day 351, please.”

Day 352

Mom was making me give away all my toys for borrowing Nancy’s change. Not like it mattered anyway, I sorted through picking the item’s with lesser meaning to toss into the growing pile of apathy. Suddenly my hand brushed against the hard case of the Millennium Falcon replica. The sharp pain of El’s disappearance ached deep in my chest. Always there but sometimes below the surface. Almost one year, 352 days since she left. I shoved the toy away and crawled into her fort.

“El, are you there? El?” Static. “It’s me. It’s Mike. It’s Day 352, 7:40pm. I’m still here. If you’re out there, say something. Or give me a sign. I won’t, I won’t even say anything. Just...I wanna know if you’re okay.”

Nothing. “I’m so stupid.” I couldn’t take it anymore, the silence. I had to get away. I stormed to my feet and was halfway across the room

when I heard it, just as if she was right behind me.

“Mike..” Distorted by the radio, but it was her, oh God, finally. I ran back over too nervous and scared that it was all in my head. “Mike?”

“Hello, is that you?”

“Yeah, it’s Dustin. What are you doing on this channel again?” The hope twisted to despair and sank from my throat deep into my gut to rest uncomfortably. “I’ve been trying to reach you all day. We were right. Max is Mad Max!”

“Yeah, I’m busy.” Shoving the device away, the tiny glimmer of hope gone and the daily sorrow sitting heavy.

“But..” Dustin’s words were cut off as I angrily stalked away.

Day 353

They knew. Goddammit the Mind Flayer knew where they were. Will knew the sound of his own phone ringing. Everyone scrambled around. Hopper rounded up all the guns, handing one over to Nancy. Steve had his bat. Lucas prepped his wrist rocket. I grabbed a vase. We all stood in the Byers living room as the Demo-Dogs swarmed the house. We could hear them thumping around trying to get in. Then they stopped. One flew through the window. Hopper turned to shoot it but it was already dead. Then the front step creaked and we all whirled around. The lock clicked open. The key chain slide out. Then the door opened and just like that, Eleven walked back into my life.

Her hair was longer and slicked back and she had obviously grown taller. She wore an oversized jacket and rolled up jeans and a pair of converses. Her eyes had black make up smudged and her nose was bleeding, but it was El, my El. I couldn’t believe my eyes. Everything

I had been praying about for the last 353 days was standing in front of me. She stared at me and I drank in her brown eyes, the last thing I had seen of her before she had gone. Those haunting brown pools drew me in. I couldn't breathe. All the emotions that had been kept at bay by the emptiness of my soul came rushing back like a tsunami at sea. I would gladly drown to hold her again. Then just like that, I could move again. Our pace matched as we crossed the floor.

"Eleven."

"Mike." And then she was in my arms. I wrapped her tightly, holding her against me for fear she would slip away again. 353 days since we last touched and I couldn't get close enough to her. Her hands gripped my shirt as if she, too, was as afraid of letting go. After 353 days, her scent, fresh and clean, filled my nose again. Her blanket and my memory couldn't do it justice.

The world stopped as we embraced. I could hear the others whisper and move, but my whole focus was firmly centered on El. I pulled back to look at her properly in the first time in 353 days.

Tears filled my eyes, blurring her figure. "I never gave up on you. I called you every night. Every night for –"

"353 days." She said, looking earnestly into my eyes and I knew, I knew she had listened, that she had craved for me as much as I had ached for her. "I heard."

Day 30

A month since El and I had been reunited. We spent so many hours sitting in silence in Hopper's hideout. No words needed, just touch. She let me run my hands over her skin, memorizing her. The guys would come over often and Max who El was slowly warming up to,

now that she knew I never saw anyone but her. We play D&D, watch the fixed TV, crack jokes, and I would hold her hand, tight against mine so she couldn't slip away again. Mom joked that I had moved out because I spent all my time with Eleven, although Mom didn't know that.

But tonight, I couldn't be with her. Mom knew it was the night of the Snow Ball because Nancy was volunteering so I was forced to leave the tranquility of El's side to dress up and go to this stupid dance. I sat at this stupid table, surrounded by my stupidly excited friends, listening to crappy music when I could have been home with her. Dustin walked over and I had a brief moment from my glum at the look of his hair. Then the music changed from some fast song to a slow ballad and the ice filled my veins again because she wasn't here.

Lucas tried to work up the nerve but Max beat him to it and the two moved to the dance floor. A young lady came up and asked Will to dance. I gave him a nudge and they, too, went to dance. Dustin wandered off in search of a partner, eventually finding a surprise one in Nancy. I sat back down, dejected at the thought of another Ball come and gone without El by my side, as the Police played through the speakers of the gym. Then movement at the corner of my eye caught my attention.

It was El. Grey dress, high heels, but El, pretty, beautiful El. I stood as her eyes cast about the room. Our eyes connected, speaking volumes that no one but we could hear.

"You look beautiful." She blushed, ducking her head down. "Do you want to dance?"

She looked uncertain and timid. "I don't know how."

"I don't either." I admitted. "Do you want to figure it out?"

She smiled and nodded as I took her hand, her thumb rubbing against mine, electricity still, even after all this time. "I think it's, yeah like that." I pulled her arms up around my shoulders and my hands settled at her waist, drawing her close to me so I could feel the heat. We shared a soft smile.

Lost in her eyes, it didn't matter how we looked to me. Our foreheads almost brushed as I got caught in the magic of her gaze. Her fingers locked behind my neck and just had I did on that awful night last year, I dipped my mouth down and she pulled me in, and our lips met. Her mouth felt warm against mine. I managed to drag my lips away to catch her stare again. Then we leaned our foreheads together and the night must have lasted forever. Because El was here just as we promised.

Author's Note:

The "Trucker" on the radio is actually morse code.
Tap is long, beep is short.